OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS

High School Education Toolkit

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation seeks to teach about and witness to the intrinsic dignity of the human person as an antidote to the grave sin of racism. The Committee explores and implements concrete solutions to address the racism that still pervades our society and our Church today and works in collaborative ways to strengthen the response of all people to this evil.

In 2018, the U.S. bishops shared a pastoral letter against racism titled *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*. All school superintendents are warmly encouraged to share the accompanying toolkit with the Catholic schools and other relevant institutions, so that students, and educators can grow together in faith, understanding, and unity.

The Pastoral Letter

Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love

Prayers

Wake Me Up Lord

Invitation from Bishop Joseph Perry

An anonymous Japanese philosopher is famous for saying: "Some people are so good that nothing a leader can do will make them better. Others are so incorrigible that nothing can be done to improve them. But the great bulk of folk go with the moral tide of the moment. The leader must help create that tide!" As church leaders, teachers, administrators, and formators, we carry a large role in reshaping the face of the earth!

High School Resources

- High School Activity: Fr. Augustus Tolton – Students explore the life of Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton, the first recognized Black Catholic priest in the U.S., who overcame slavery and systemic racism to serve with humility and holiness. His story invites reflection on vocation, perseverance, and racial justice in the Church.
- High School Activity: Dehumanization in Nazi Germany – This activity examines how propaganda and ideology led to the systematic dehumanization of Jews and other marginalized groups under the Nazi regime. Students reflect on the sacredness of human life, the Church's opposition to anti-Semitism, and the moral imperative to resist racism and hate.
- High School Activity: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy – Students engage with Dr. King's teachings on nonviolence, justice, and love of neighbor. Through Scripture, discussion, and reflection, they consider how his legacy calls Catholics to prophetic witness and faithful action against racism today.
- High School Activity: Structures of Sin and Racism – This lesson introduces the concept of social sin and explores how racism operates within institutions and policies. Students analyze Church teachings on solidarity and justice, and reflect on how they can help transform unjust structures in their communities.